

University of New Orleans

**ScholarWorks@UNO**

---

English Faculty Publications

Department of English and Foreign Languages

---

Winter 1999

## Grief (poem)

John Gery

*University of New Orleans*, [jgery@uno.edu](mailto:jgery@uno.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.uno.edu/engl\\_facpubs](https://scholarworks.uno.edu/engl_facpubs)



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Gery, John. "Grief" (poem). *The Iowa Review* 29.3 (Winter 1999): 80.

This Poem is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English and Foreign Languages at ScholarWorks@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uno.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uno.edu).

## *John Gery*

### GRIEF

offers no comparisons and teaches no lessons.  
It sits across from you in this dark room  
or passes by on the street, and if you should

lean toward it or attempt to exchange  
a word or two, slowly it will maneuver  
out of your way, its back turned

as though it hasn't noticed you. You try  
but can never pick it out in a crowd  
down at the station house, although someone

you hardly know, maybe met only once,  
keeps coming into your mind, causing you  
to question why you seem so unlike

yourself, like nothing else you can  
remember: You forget to seek relief  
in the usual ways, a glass of water

or evening light. Even stranger,  
you imagine returning from an errand  
or brief sleep, only to find grief

in a new hat parked on your doorstep  
with a basket of fresh figs! It doesn't  
matter, really, that it has a name, too,

that can be spelled out on a sheet of paper,  
then erased, as haply as I,  
the one typing this meek escape.